

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed February 11, 2008 has been carefully considered.
Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Subject Matter Indicated Allowed or Allowable

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowance of claims 12 and 13.
Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowability of claims 11, 20 and 21, subject to their re-writing in independent form. For the reasons set forth below, Applicants believe that claims 11, 20 and 21 are allowable on their own merit and their re-writing is unnecessary.

Rejection(s) Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a)

Claims 9, 14, 15, 16 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Massie (U.S. pat. no. 5,625,576). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claims 9, 14, 15, 16 and 22 have been amended to state that the flex is manifested in displacement of multiple points of the simulated-multi-articulated structure relative to a non-flex position thereof. Support for this feature can be found for example in the discussion of FIG. 8, beginning on page 21, line 12, relating to the relative displacement between the ghost hand and the simulated graphical hand.

The Office Action points to column 23, lines 51-54 (and to column 15, lines 12-26), quoting from Massie: "Thus, the further the point is 'beyond' the virtual wall, the greater will be the resistive force." However, these passages refer to the amount of resistive force applied at the master location in order to give the user a realistic impression of what is being encountered at the slave location. They simply do not address flex that is manifested in displacement of multiple points of the simulated-multi-articulated structure relative to a non-flex position thereof. Accordingly, Massie fails to meet at least this limitation of claims 9, 14, 15, 16 and 22, and the passage of these claims to allowance is respectfully urged.

Claims 10 and 17-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Massie in view of Kramer et al. (U.S. pat. no. 5,280,265).

Claims 10 and 17-19 have also been amended to specify that the flex is manifested in displacement of multiple points of the simulated-multi-articulated structure (or hand) relative to a non-flex position thereof, distinguishing these claims over Massie for at least this reason. Moreover, Kramer fails to remedy Massie's failure to show this feature, and the claims 10 and 17-19 are therefore patentable over these two references even if their combination were proper, which is not conceded.

Conclusion

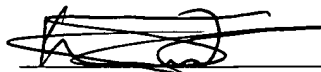
In view of the preceding discussion, Applicants respectfully urge that the claims of the present application define patentable subject matter and should be passed to allowance.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone call would help advance prosecution of the present invention, the Examiner is kindly invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number below.

Please charge any additional required fees, including those necessary to obtain extensions of time to render timely the filing of the instant Amendment and/or Reply to Office Action, or credit any overpayment not otherwise credited, to our deposit account no. 50-1698.

Respectfully submitted,
THELEN REID BROWN RAYSMAN & STEINER LLP

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Khaled Shami
Reg. No. 38,745

THELEN REID BROWN RAYSMAN & STEINER LLP
P.O. Box 640640
San Jose, CA 95164-0640
Tel. (408) 292-5800
Fax. (408) 287-8040